IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 24, line 18 with the following new paragraph:

Referring again to FIGURE 2, floating liner 50 is designed to capture welding wire W shortly after it passes through central opening 44 of retainer ring 40. By the capture of the welding wire W shortly after the welding wire passes through retaining ring 40, the incidence of the welding wire twisting or forming e-scripts are significantly reduced. [[One]] Once the wire passes into the floating liner, the wire is supported in the liner thereby reducing the ability of the wire to become tangled even when loops of wire prematurely pass above the retaining ring. The size of the sleeve opening 62 and passageway 58 of tube 52 is selected to further limit or prevent the welding wire from twisting or forming an e-script as it passes through the floating liner 50.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 24, line 26 with the following new paragraph:

Referring again to FIGURE 5, a weight 70 is secured to lower end 54 of tube 52. Weight 70 is designed to increase the gravity force on lower end 54 which downward force is equal to or similar to the average upper force being applied to floating liner 50 from frictional forces due to the welding wire passing into guide sleeve 60 and through passageway 58 of tube 52. The balance of the frictional forces to the weight of the floating liner is illustrated in FIGURE 6. W_1 represents the weight of tube 52 of the floating liner. W_2 represents the weight of weight 70. F represents the frictional force asserted on the inner passageway [[50]] 58 of the floating liner when the wire contacts the inner walls of tube 52 as the wire moves through the floating liner. By selecting the proper size of weight 70, the upward force applied to the floating liner by frictional force F is equally countered by the weight of the floating liner tube W_1 and the weight W_2 of weight 70. This force

and weight balance is represented by $F \approx W_1 + W_2$. By selecting a weight 70 having the proper weight profile, tube 52 exhibits a floating effect on the top surface of retaining ring 40 as shown in FIGURE 3. This floating affect results in the lower end 54 of tube 52 moving up and down above the upper surface of retainer ring 40 as wire W is paid out from wire stack or coils S.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 26, line 27 with the following new paragraph:

Referring now to FIGURE 8, another embodiment of the floating liner is illustrated. Floating liner 50 is illustrated as including a plurality of sleeves formed in the upper portion of the floating liner. The sleeves are designed to allow the lower end of the floating liner to move downwardly into container C as the welding wire is paid out from wire stack or coils S. The sleeves also enable the length of the floating liner to change as the wire is paid out from the container. The upper portion of floating liner 50 includes an inner tube sleeve 110 having an internal passageway 112 and an outer tube sleeve 120 having a passageway 122. Interior tube sleeve [[11]] 110 has a diameter which is smaller than the diameter of outer tube sleeve 120 such that interior sleeve 110 can be telescopically received in passageway 122 of outer tube sleeve 120. Typically, one or more sections of the floating liner are made of material that facilitates in the proper telescoping of the tube sleeves with respect to one another. As can be appreciated, the tube sections can be made of the same or different materials. The tube sleeves are positioned such that they are generally parallel to the longitudinal axis of container C; however, other orientations can and do occur as the wire is paid out from the container. The plurality of sections of the floating liner facilitates in the extension and retraction of the upper portion of floating liner 50 as lower end 54 of floating liner 50 follows the downward movement of retaining ring 40 during the paying out of welding wire W from wire stack or coils S.

When the floating liner includes telescoping sections in the upper portion of the floating liner, the lower portion of the floating liner can be formed of a flexible or nonflexible material.